

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions
and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An apparatus for helping to protect a vehicle occupant, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device having a stored, deflated condition and an inflated condition for helping to protect the a vehicle occupant;

an inflator for providing inflation fluid to inflate said protection device; and

a flap made of fabric material, said flap being stored with said protection device, said flap having a first end portion and an opposite second end portion, said first end portion of said flap being fixed relative to said protection device and said second end portion of said flap not being fixed relative to said protection device;

said flap being deployed by inflation of said protection device into a position engaging and covering a head of a vehicle occupant with said second end portion of said flap located over and past the head of the vehicle occupant, said flap being for guiding deployment of said protection device over and past the head of the said vehicle occupant, said flap preventing said protection device from directly engaging the head of the vehicle occupant, said protection device sliding along said flap during inflation of said protection device.

Claim 2 (Original): An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 for mounting on an instrument panel of a vehicle, the instrument panel having an upper portion extending generally rearward in the vehicle from the vehicle windshield and defining a deployment opening facing generally upward and rearward in the vehicle and having a forward edge portion and a rearward edge portion, said flap when deployed extending from the rearward edge portion of the deployment opening.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said protection device ~~when inflated~~ has a rearward-facing outer surface portion that is closest to the vehicle occupant when said protection device is inflated, said flap extending along said rearward-facing outer surface portion of said protection device when said protection device is inflated.

Claim 4 (Original): An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said flap has first and second major side surfaces, said first major side surface of said flap having a higher coefficient of friction than said second major side surface of said flap, said first major side surface of said flap facing rearward toward the vehicle occupant when said protection device is inflated, said second major side surface of said flap facing forward and extending along a rearward-facing outer surface portion of said protection device when said protection device is inflated.

Claim 5 (Original): An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said apparatus includes a housing in which said protection device is in the deflated condition and said flap are stored.

Claim 6 (Original): An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said apparatus includes a housing in which said protection device is stored in the deflated condition, said flap being folded separately from and overlying said protection device when in the stored, deflated condition.

Claim 7 (Original): An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said apparatus includes a housing in which said protection device is stored in the deflated condition, said flap being folded with said protection device when in the stored, deflated condition.

Claim 8 (Canceled)

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): An apparatus for helping to protect a vehicle occupant, said apparatus comprising:

an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device
having a stored, deflated condition and an inflated condition
for helping to protect the vehicle occupant;

an inflator for providing inflation fluid to inflate
said protection device; and

a flap made of fabric material, said flap being
stored with said protection device;

said flap being deployed by inflation of said
protection device into a position engaging and covering a head
of a vehicle occupant for guiding deployment of said
protection device over the head of the vehicle occupant, An
apparatus as set forth in claim 8 wherein said

a first end portion of said flap being is sewn to
said protection device with a permanent stitching section and
a said second end portion of said flap being is sewn to said
protection device with a releasable stitching section.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): An apparatus for helping
to protect a vehicle occupant, said apparatus comprising:
an inflatable vehicle occupant protection device
having a stored, deflated condition and an inflated condition
for helping to protect the vehicle occupant;
an inflator for providing inflation fluid to inflate
said protection device; and
a flap made of fabric material, said flap being
stored with said protection device;
said flap being deployed by inflation of said
protection device into a position engaging and covering a head
of a vehicle occupant for guiding deployment of said
protection device over the head of the vehicle occupant, An
apparatus as set forth in claim 1 wherein said

opposite end portions of said flap being are sewn to
said protection device, said flap having and said flap has a
rupturable portion located intermediate said end portions,
said flap rupturing at said rupturable portion upon inflation

of said protection device ~~air bag~~ to enable said flap to move into a position engaging and covering the a head of the a vehicle occupant.